

Syllabus: PSYC 301-005
Spring, 2006
James F. Sanford

Date	Topic	Assignment
Jan 25	Introduction/psychology as a science	Ch. 1
Feb 1	Scientific method/theories in science	Ch. 2
Feb 8	Ethical issues in research	Ch. 3
Feb 15	Observational methods/review for 1 st exam	Ch. 4
Feb 22	First Exam	
Feb 24	Last day to drop (no tuition remission)	
Mar 1	Review 1 st exam/survey research	Ch. 5
Mar 8	Unobtrusive measures	Ch. 6
Mar 15	No class: spring break	Have fun!
Mar 22	Independent and matched groups designs	Ch. 7
Mar 29	Repeated measures designs/review for 2 nd exam	Ch. 8
Apr 5	Second Exam	
Apr 12	Review 2 nd exam/Complex designs (I)	Ch. 9
Apr 19	Complex designs (II)	Ch. 9 (cont.)
Apr 26	Single case designs	Ch. 10
May 3	Quasi-experimental designs	Ch. 11
May 10	Final Exam (starts at 7:30)	

Texts: Shaughnessy, J. J., Zechmeister, E. B., & Zechmeister, J. S. (2006). *Research methods in psychology* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed., 2001). Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association. [Required for lab.]

Thaiss, C., & Sanford, J. F. (2000). *Writing for psychology*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. [Recommended for lab.]

Course goals: This course is designed to provide an introduction to research methods in psychology, and through the laboratory, to provide students with an opportunity to use some of these methods in research settings. All psychology students must have a good grasp of basic research methodology to understand how psychologists investigate topics in human behavior, cognition, affect, etc. Future graduate students need to be especially cognizant of this subject because research is an essential part of graduate training. By completion of this course, you should have a good grasp of the major research methods used in psychology, when they are used, and their major advantages and drawbacks. You should be able to select a research problem, choose and implement an appropriate design, and complete the study.

Laboratory: You must be enrolled in one of the labs associated with PSYC 301. Please attend the lab in which you are officially enrolled in order to ensure adequate space and computer access.

Exams: There are three in-class exams, each scheduled to cover about one-third of the course material. Exams will emphasize the material in that unit. However, since research methods tend to be cumulative, there may be a few questions that involve overlap with earlier units. The final exam, especially, will draw on material from earlier units. Questions may include multiple choice, identification, short answer/short essay, figure drawing, and fill-in-the-blank.

Homework assignments: Most chapters in your text include “challenge questions” at the end of the chapter and “stretching exercises” within the chapter. Often one or more of these questions and exercises will be assigned as homework. We will then discuss the answers at the beginning of the next period. Thus, assignments must be completed by the **beginning** of the class. If you expect to miss class or arrive late, be sure to have a classmate bring your work to class or e-mail it to me ahead of time. Late work will not be accepted. Homework will be graded as fully acceptable (full credit), partially acceptable (half credit), or not acceptable (including not submitted and submitted after the start of class). However, the effort and thought put into the work is more important than getting an answer correct. Please note that you may work together on the assignments if you want to. However, what you turn in should be something you have composed yourself.

Quizzes: There will be occasional quizzes that cover assigned reading or material discussed in class the previous week or earlier in the class. These will be short (about three questions each) and may be administered any time during the class.

Grades: Grades will be determined as follows: exams, 15% each; homework, quizzes, and class participation, 15% (the distribution of points in these categories will be determined by the respective frequency during the semester); lab, 40%. Class participation implies attendance and active involvement in class discussion. In case of a borderline grade, consistency and direction of change may be taken into account.

Possible grades include A+ (98% or better), A (92-97%), A- (90-91%), B+ 88-89%), B (82-87%), B- (80-81%), C+ (78-79%), C (70-77%), D (60-69%), and F (less than 60%). All percentages are approximate. I normally do not award grades of C-.

Extra credit. Students may earn up to two (2) points of extra credit by serving as participants in research studies in the Psychology Department. One point will be awarded for each hour of participation. Please sign up by using the Experimentrix Web site.

Writing and technology. PSYC 301 is an approved writing intensive course. This means that in the laboratory you will have multiple writing assignments that build upon one another and that the total amount of writing equals or exceeds GMU’s specified minimum for a writing intensive course. The lab will also require on-line literature searches using PsycINFO and other electronic databases, meeting part of the technology-across-the-curriculum requirement. Most extra-class communications will use e-mail.

Office hours, etc.:

Office hours: 6:30-7:15 Wednesday

Office location: 2046 David King Hall

Office phone: 703-993-1351

e-mail address: jsanford@gmu.edu. I may also use my home address (Jsan52@aol.com) in some communications. However, please use my GMU account when contacting me. All GMU messages are forwarded to my AOL account (but not vice versa), and I check the GMU account more frequently.

Cell phones and pagers: Turn 'em off! Or put them on vibrate! The only time a cell phone should ring during class is when the pizza delivery person is checking on where to deliver the pizza you have ordered for all your classmates and me.

E-mail list: I have constructed a class e-mail list that I will use frequently to communicate with you outside of class. Since I automatically have access to your GMU account, your GMU addresses were used in constructing the list. Therefore, please check this account frequently and be sure that there is adequate space in your in-box. You are also invited to use it for class-related functions (e.g., setting up a review session prior to an exam). Please use it only for class-related purposes, however. To distribute a message to the rest of the class, simply click on "reply all" to my latest e-mail. I will try to update the list frequently to reflect student adds and drops.

George Mason has established a policy that precludes sending personal information (e.g., grades) to students using any non-GMU account. This policy was enacted to ensure your privacy and protection. Therefore, please request personal information using your gm.u.edu address only.

For students with disabilities: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and also contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Honor Code: All provisions of the GMU Honor Code will be followed in this class. Unless otherwise announced, books, class notes, personal interaction, etc. will not be permitted during exams and quizzes. Homework assignments must be completed individually (but student discussion is allowed and encouraged, as described above). The Honor Code as it applies in lab will be discussed during an early lab period.

Psychology in the Community: You may earn one (1) hour of extra credit by enrolling in Psychology in the Community Laboratory (PSYC 328) and completing service learning by serving as a research assistant to a psychology faculty member or another social/behavioral scientist. If you choose to do so, you will complete a learning agreement that must show that you will be learning about research design, procedure, etc. while completing your service learning. A maximum of six (6) hours of credit may be applied toward a psychology major from PSYC 327, 328, 421, 422, 548, and 549. Additional hours may be applied toward general elective credit. I must approve your service learning site and learning agreement.

And finally.... Psychology is an empirical discipline, differing from philosophy and other psychology precursors by its use of the scientific method. Psychology's knowledge base is rooted in empirical findings, and understanding research principles is essential to understanding psychology. PSYC 301 is not a difficult course, but it is work-intensive. It is important that you keep up with the material, since information covered later in the course builds on earlier material. Be sure to attend classes and labs, complete homework assignments, and avail yourself of office hours. Also, try to make a best friend or three among your classmates and support each other by studying together and questioning each other about concepts and procedures. I look forward to working with you!